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ABSTRACT

This handbook is a practical guide that can be used by an individual, group, or group leader in planning an active role in community development. Major topics covered are organizing the group; purpose and structure of your organization; how to identify the problem; planning an active program to solve a community problem; planning a large meeting or workshop; chairing a large meeting or workshop; chairing a small group or committee meeting; making your presence felt in the community; communications, details, and paper work; and resources available to you. Each of the topics is presented in detailed steps or guidelines for carrying out the specific activity. This guide's companion publication, "Community Problem Solving: Mobilizing the Disadvantaged--A Training Model," is also available. (SH)

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HANDBOOK FOR COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

by

Sara E. Kuhn and Boyd E. Rossing

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FOREWORD

This book and its companion publication, **Community Problem Solving: Mobilizing the Disadvantaged--A Training Model**, were the final report of an exciting two-year study conducted by the Adult Education Department, University of Georgia. The study was funded by Title I of the Higher Education Act and conducted as one of a series of studies at Florida State University, Tuskegee Institute, and the University of Georgia.

Sara Kuhn and Boyd Rossing, doctoral students in the Adult Education Department, are the authors of this book and the companion model. They and their fellow student, Clarence Moore, spent two years in assisting a group of rural women in developing their leadership capabilities in order to exercise their rights and privileges in their community. They were successful beyond our fondest expectations.

Dr. Ernestine Boclair, Project Director from Florida State University, provided leadership for the total project, and her assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

The handbook is a practical guide that can be used by groups in planning an active role in the development of their community. The model is a theoretical base for professionals, students, and practitioners interested in community development.

We hope that the sense of excitement shared by Sara, Boyd, and Clarence, the heightened expectations of the community participants, and the satisfaction of the project directors is communicated to you, the reader, in the following pages.

Curtis Ulmer
Professor and Head
Department of Adult Education
The University of Georgia

INTRODUCTION

Most people who live in a community become concerned at some time or other about conditions in that community. Perhaps there is no playground for children; perhaps the streets need repair; perhaps some people feel they have no voice in the community's government; perhaps simply a new street light is needed. Often people do not know how to act on their concern; though they see a problem and want to do something about it, they aren't sure exactly how to begin. This handbook was prepared to help those people.

The **Handbook** evolved from meetings with a group of citizens from Morgan County, Georgia. These people wanted to help solve the problems they saw in their community, but they weren't sure how. Few of them belonged to any organizations aside from their churches; very few had any idea of methods of making their ideas known and put into operation. As a result of work with this group, which came to be known as the Morgan County Leadership Council, a series of guides and worksheets was developed. These guides are designed to help a group of people organize themselves into a working force, identify the problems of their community that concern them, and develop a program to solve those problems. These guides could be used by an organization already existing, could be used by an organization begun solely to handle a particular problem, or could be used by an individual. Examples of the steps suggested in each guide are drawn from the Morgan County experience. It is important to recognize that these examples are only instances of one group's responses to a given situation; another group composed of different people would undoubtedly respond differently.

NOTES TO THE TRAINER

Though the guides in this handbook were written so that an individual or a group might use them to improve their ability to cope with community problems without utilizing an outside trainer or teacher, we realize that it is more likely that a trainer will be involved. Perhaps the trainer will be working with the group through Cooperative Extension or some other government agency. Perhaps he or she will be part of the outreach or extension division of a nearby college or university. It is possible that he or she may be a member of some action-oriented national organization. The trainer may even be one of the newly formed organization's members who has accepted the responsibility of directing the training of the members toward a more active role in solving their community's problems. For whoever is acting as the group's trainer, however, here are some suggestions that we, the trainers for the Morgan County Leadership Council, thought might prove helpful.

First, we want you to realize that this handbook is a product of our work in Morgan County and, as such, need not be taken as the final word in community problem solving. We hope some or all of the material in it will be useful to you, but obviously it must be tailored to your group's needs. Feel free to do just that--and also to eliminate sections or add materials as you discover your group's needs.

In general, our group met once a month for about eight months in a workshop setting. Each workshop centered on one or, at most, two topics. The topics might involve information that the group felt they needed or skills that they felt they lacked. After a short program on each topic, we felt a guide to the information and skills we had practiced was needed. The result is this handbook and the guides and worksheets inside. Our group has continued to use these guides whenever they plan a new program, and they have found them quite helpful.

You and your group may choose to adopt a similar format of workshop followed by the use of these materials as guides, or you may feel that the guides are sufficient in themselves and that your group needs no additional information. Indeed, your organization may need only selected portions of the guide, or you may devise an entirely different method of using it.

To make usage as simple as possible, an effort has been made to write each section as an independent unit; and though we attempted to arrange the sections in a logical order, it is not at all necessary to read them sequentially. Obviously, there is some overlap among sections, and because we wished each section to be independent, there is also some repetition. We would suggest that a trainer read over the whole handbook and then select and arrange the materials therein to suit his own organizations's purposes.

Concerning readability of the **Handbook**, efforts were made to keep the language and vocabulary reasonably simple while still clearly handling the concepts. For some groups, background work on vocabulary and concepts may be necessary. We wish you good luck and success in confronting your community's problems.

Boyd and Sara

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATION

Your town or neighborhood has a problem, and you'd like to do something about it, but . . . well, just how much can one person do, anyway? After all, you have no position, no power. What's the use?

One person **can** do something. One person can complain to people who have power and position, and offer suggestions on how a problem should be solved. One person can vote and ask friends to vote for individuals who will respond to people and their problems. And, most important of all, one person can find other people who share these concerns about a problem and create a group to work toward solving the problem. That group, that new organization dedicated to solving the problem, will provide the power and position behind you that you lacked before.

Remember: it takes only **one** concerned person to get the ball rolling. One person can vote, can complain, can talk to others and make them concerned. A group of those concerned people can accomplish even more. By their very nature as a formal organization, the group will attract more public attention, and also more attention from officials. Where there were a few individual voices before, now there is one unified chorus . . . and that chorus is likely to be LOUD. Where before politicians might have considered a few scattered votes, now there is a whole bloc of them. Where before there is just one pair of hands, now there are plenty.

But it all starts with one person who sees a problem and cares enough to try to solve it.

ORGANIZING THE GROUP

You are unhappy about a situation in your community and you would like to see it changed. So, what do you do about it?

First: Find out if other people are also unhappy about this situation.

Are you the only person who sees this situation as a problem? Ask your friends and neighbors; talk about it in the beauty shop and grocery store, at church, at the filling station. If others are also unhappy, it's time to do something about it.

Second: Call a public meeting.

After you've talked to the people you know and found out who shares your concern, ask two or three of those most interested to help you organize a group to solve this problem. **Don't wait for somebody else to start; you start.** Your committee will need to do the following things:

1. Set a time and place for the meeting. The meeting should be held somewhere convenient to everyone at a time that does not interfere with other activities. You should allow enough time--at least two weeks--before the meeting to get ready.

2. Ask for use of the room or building.

3. Call every person you can think of who might be interested in helping solve the problem, and tell them about the meeting. Ask each of those people to call someone else.

4. Ask the local newspaper to run an announcement about the meeting. Ask at the same time for a reporter to cover the meeting when it occurs.

5. Ask the radio station to run a public service announcement concerning the meeting.

6. You and your committee should announce the meeting and its purpose at any organization to which you belong--church, sewing circle, anything. Also, you should go to other organization's meetings, explain the purpose of the meeting, and invite people to come.

Remember: **divide the work** up among your committee. You'll reach more people and have more ideas to work with. Now, let's work on that meeting.

Third: Plan you public meeting.

You and your committee need to plan this meeting carefully in order to organize people to help solve your problem. Here are some things you and your committee need to consider:

1. Choose someone to chair your meeting. This person will help represent your concerns at the meeting; however, he or she should not be responsible for planning or presenting the entire program. Those responsibilities should be shared by everyone on the committee. The person who chairs the meeting will keep the meeting orderly and moving. There is a guide in this **Handbook** to help him or her.

2. Decide on some method to illustrate the problem you see in your community. If the problem is physical, such as streets needing repair, pictures or slides are a good way. A speaker or panel discussion might be a good idea to present a problem that cannot be shown visually. Charts might be used, too. Use your imagination!

3. Make sure your concerns will be presented clearly and specifically to the people attending the meeting. Explain **what you think the problem is, why it's a problem, and what you'd like changed.**

Fourth: Hold your meeting.

You'll want to follow the plans you and your committee made for the meeting. But at the same time, be flexible enough for people to feel comfortable to ask questions and make suggestions. Some things you'll want to include are:

1. Ask those attending to write their names and addresses on a list so there is a way to contact interested people.

2. Open the meeting for a period of general discussion. The person chairing the meeting will be very busy here, trying to insure that everyone has a chance to be heard.

3. Ask for suggestions about how to solve the problem, specific things that could be done by your group. You and your committee should have some ideas, too. Be sure to ask someone to take notes.

4. Make sure the group decides by vote whether to meet again.

5. If the group decides to meet again, suggest that a planning committee for that meeting be selected to decide what type of organization the group should have and what offices are needed, as well as do the other things necessary to get ready for the next meeting.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

For other people to understand clearly what your group is working toward, it is important for your members to know and understand what its purpose is. And for any organization to be effective, it is necessary for that organization to have a definite structure, with certain people assigned certain responsibilities. An important thing to remember, however, is that both the purpose and the structure of an organization can change as situations change, new people become interested, or the concerns of the organization itself change. Remember: at all times be flexible. Now let's discuss these two aspects of your organization--and how to go about acquiring them.

The Purpose

The purpose of an organization is a clear statement of what that organization hopes to accomplish. We need to give our organization focus and direction. It may be quite specific.

> **Example:** The purpose of this organization is to raise money to buy recreational equipment for the County Junior High School.

Or it may be very general.

> **Example:** The purpose of this organization is to promote peace and understanding throughout the world.

Usually the more general the purpose of the organization, the longer the organization will function, because general purposes are harder to attain and take longer than specific purposes, such as acquiring recreational equipment for a school. When you begin to write a purpose for your organization, you might want to follow these helpful steps:

1. Your organization should appoint a committee to define the purpose of the group. This committee might be a special committee just for this purpose, or it might be one of the regular committees of the organization.

2. The committee should talk together about exactly what the organization wants to do. They should try to state this in such a manner that all the differing opinions in the group are accounted for. Usually the manner in which the purpose will be accomplished is not included in the statement; what it is hoped will be accomplished is all that is necessary.

3. The committee should present the statement it suggests to the whole organization for its changes and approval.

Remember: The purpose of an organization can change as the concerns of the members change, and as the problem they are working on changes. Be flexible, and redefine your organization's purpose if necessary.

Structure

The structure of an organization is simply the way that organization divides its responsibilities. There are no right or wrong ways to do this; the structure an organization uses depends on the number of people in the organization and how they work best together. Select a structure that seems to fit the group---informal or formal, many offices or few, offices held for a short term or long. A good idea, though, is to allow as many people as possible to participate, either through committee positions or other work.

Some positions you might want in your organization are:

president or chairperson
vice-president
secretary
treasurer
planning committee or council

In addition, you might want several smaller permanent committees. Some that might be useful are:

phoning committee
publicity committee
refreshment committee

There may also be other committees that will work for a short while and then disband. For example, if a speaker is coming to your meeting, there may be a need for a committee or panel to work together to list questions that the organization definitely wants asked. After the meeting at which the speaker appears, the committee would no longer be needed and so would disband.

You and your group will want to answer these questions when you decide on the structure for your organization:

1. What offices do we need in order to divide up the responsibility fairly?
2. What will the responsibility of each office be?
3. How long should each officer serve before a new election?
4. What committees do we need to keep the organization running smoothly?
5. How long should people serve on these committees?
6. How can we best involve all our members in the running of our organization?

Following are the purpose and structure of the Morgan County Leadership Council, the organization referred to in the introduction. It has a rather complex structure, because the members were concerned that everyone be given a chance to serve on the planning council. This is one way of structuring an organization; it is certainly not the only way, and it may not be good at all for your own organization. Consider it simply as an example.

Purpose and Organization of Morgan County Leadership Council

Purpose

To provide more effective and representative government in Morgan County by promoting representation by responsible citizens on decision making groups, educating the community on government in Morgan County and increasing citizen participation in civic affairs.

Organization of Planning Council

1. **Purpose.** The Planning Council will meet between monthly workshops to plan the workshop and to keep up with projects which are being carried out in the county by the overall group.

2. **Number of Persons on the Council.** There will be 10 persons on each monthly council.

3. **How Long Will They Serve?**
   5 members will serve for only 1 month.
   2 members will be elected in the current month to serve as chairperson and recorder for the next month.
   3 members will serve for 3 months. They are called advising members.

4. **Duties of Different Council Members.**
   1 Chairperson
   1 Recorder
   1 Corresponding Secretary
   1 Planning Council Contact Person
   2 Workshop Contact Persons

Treasurer's Duties

The treasurer will open a checking account for the group and keep records on the finances of the group. The treasurer does not have to attend planning council meetings. The planning council will decide what purchases are to be made from the treasury.

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

"How to identify the problem?" You're probably thinking, "That's easy! Everyone knows already what the problem is." But let's think about that a minute.

A problem is actually a situation that is bothering you and needs changing. It may be a problem for just one person, one family, the families who live on one block, the families of a neighborhood, all the people in a community, or even every person in a state or nation. Generally, in this handbook we are concerned with neighborhood and community problems.

Though everyone in a community might agree there is a problem, different people will define the problem in different ways, according to the amount of information they have and their own concerns and prejudices. For instance, suppose in one community the streets are badly in need of repair. That's the problem that community has, right? Actually, the streets that need repair are just part of the problem. To find a solution to this problem, leaders in this community must find out **why** the streets are in bad repair. And different people will give different reasons. Some possible reasons for bad streets in one section of a city are:

1. The machines needed to fix the streets are broken.
2. The town doesn't have enough money in its budget to repair the streets.
3. There is no person in the city government responsible for street repair.
4. The mayor or city manager doesn't care about the part of town where the streets are in bad condition.
5. The county is supposed to repair those streets.
6. The streets were just repaired, but the asphalt was of poor quality and so the results didn't last.
7. For some reason, the ground keeps shifting at that location, thus making cracks in the street.
8. The city government doesn't include a representative from that part of town, so the city government isn't aware of the problem.

As you can see from these examples, a problem of a neighborhood or community is seldom simple. The people interested in solving the problem need to examine all its aspects, so that they can **first** understand clearly what the problem is, **second** decide on ways to solve the problem, and **third** explain their ideas to others. Some steps to help accomplish these things are listed now, with specific examples of each step from the Morgan County Leadership Council's experience.

First: Decide what the problem is that the group wants to solve and who wants to work on solving it. What you decide will become the purpose of your organization.

Example: At the July workshop the group decided that improving education in Morgan County would be the goal of the whole group.

Second: Look at what you know about the problem now; get everyone's opinion.

Example: At the June and July Workshops, we talked about education in Morgan County. Some people thought the school board did not have enough real representation from the black community. Others thought the discipline policies in the schools were unfair and foolish. Some felt students were not learning useful job skills.

Third: Decide what other information you need. Some things you need to know are:

1. How big is the problem? Who suffers from it? Do they care and do they want a change?
2. What causes the problem? How does it happen? Who is responsible for what?
3. Can it be solved? What could be done about it? What efforts have been made before?

Example: At the July and August Planning Council meetings we decided we needed to know answers to these questions:

1. How does the school board work? How do people get on it?
2. How do other people feel about education in Morgan County?
3. What is the superintendent doing about discipline in the schools?

Fourth: Develop a plan for collecting the information you need. Some ways of getting information are to:

1. Invite speakers to your meetings.
2. Go and interview officials or professionals.
3. Attend meetings of other groups.
4. Look at minutes of board meetings, regulations, books, pamphlets, newspapers, or other written materials with information on the problem.
5. Survey people in the community and get their opinions.

Example: Many speakers were invited to different workshops. They included a school board member, the superintendent of schools, the county commissioners, the clerk of the superior court and the jury commissioners. Someone interviewed the county attorney and brought his regulations to a meeting. Others interviewed the clerk of the court. We surveyed the community in October.

Fifth: What is the problem as you see it now? Usually, the planning committee puts the information together to answer this question. Remember, your ideas as to what the problem is may change at this point!

Example: The planning council met in January and looked at all we had learned. They decided that the big problem concerning everyone is how to get fairer and more responsible representation on boards, including the school board, and also among elected officials in the county. A big part of this problem is getting more people in the community to get involved and do something about community problems. It was felt that doing something about this would help improve education as well as other services in the county.

Sixth: Set your new goal or purpose. This new purpose will reflect all the information you've learned and may be different from the first one.

Example: The January Planning Council decided that the purpose of the group would be "to provide more effective and representative government in Morgan County by promoting representation by responsible citizens on decision-making groups, educating the community on government in Morgan County and increasing citizen participation in civic affairs."

PLANNING AN ACTIVE PROGRAM TO SOLVE A COMMUNITY PROBLEM

You now have an organization ready and eager to work on your community's problems. You have gathered all sorts of information on the problem, and you have clearly identified exactly what the problem is. You've clearly set your purpose, and you're ready to move. What do you do next?

Before you jump into any project, stop and do a little planning. You want a project that you can begin work on and that will show some immediate results, but you also want some long-range results. That takes coordination, and coordination takes planning. You can always change the plans you've made if for some reason they don't seem suitable later. Here are some steps to help your planning.

First: You and your members make a list of all the possible programs and projects that might help solve the problem and answer your purpose. These might range from fund-raising projects to getting new people elected to public office. You may want to have a speaker or a public forum to acquaint the rest of the community with the problem. You may want to sponsor a short course. There is no form for these; just use your imagination and get ideas from books, other organizations, and professionals.

As an example of the kinds of things you might do, look at the following list the Morgan County Leadership Council developed:

1. Get the school board changed from appointed to elected.
2. Have a voters' registration workshop.
3. Send names of persons as nominations for appointments to the school board, the jury commission, poll watchers, and other groups.
4. Send representatives to the local government meetings where decisions are made so that the organization's opinions will be known.
5. Back candidates for public office who will further the group's purposes.

Second: Decide which major project is needed most, would be most effective, and therefore should be begun first. What smaller projects can be done at the same time? For instance, in the example above, the group decided the first, third, and fifth projects were long-range ones; they decided to begin working on the third one. The other two were projects that could be done while the long-range projects were in progress.

Third: The Planning Council should develop a plan of action for doing the project. The following actions might help in planning:

1. Ask professionals or people who have done these projects before to help you plan. Possible resources for help are listed later in the handbook.
2. Decide what the purpose of the project is. Who do you want to reach? What do you want to do for them?

3. Look at the different ways of doing the project and choose the best way.

4. Decide what you will need in the way of people, money, equipment, and facilities.

5. Decide the timing--when to start, when to finish each step, when to finish the whole project.

6. Assign responsibilities to people.

Fourth: Carry out your action plan. Stay with it, do your part, and you will see results!!

Fifth: As you are carrying out your project, get together from time to time and look at what is happening, to consider the following questions:

1. Are you accomplishing the purpose of the project?

2. Are you reaching the right people and doing what you set out to do?

3. What changes are needed? Where do you need to put greater efforts? How can you overcome the roadblocks you are coming up against?

There will be some disappointments and problems, but don't give up the effort. Continue on course until you finish the project. If you find you simply can't do the whole project as you planned, choose part of it and complete that.

Sixth: At the end of the project, look back over your successes. See what lessons are to be learned from your disappointments and then set out on a new project.

PLANNING A LARGE MEETING OR WORKSHOP

It's very likely that much of what your organization does will be accomplished in large meetings of the whole membership. When these meetings have as their purpose the teaching of some skill or the giving of information, they may be called workshops. Your group may choose to call them membership meetings, workshops, councils, or assemblies; it really doesn't matter. What does matter is that these meetings are planned carefully, so as to get the most use out of your time, as well as to keep people interested and wanting to come back. Here are some things you'll want to consider before any large meeting, whether it is to be public or closed to anyone beside your membership:

First: Gather your planning committee; several people will stand a greater chance of seeing all possibilities than just one. Choose a chairman/woman; choose a recorder or secretary.

Second: Decide what tasks this large meeting will handle. Tasks are usually in one of the following four categories:

1. Decisions of procedure which can be made for the membership by the planning committee. These might include the following: When will the meeting be? Where will it be? Who will chair the meeting? Will there be refreshments? Will the meeting be opened to the public?

2. Providing a method to present needed information to the members. The planning committee will select the method to be used; the task for the workshop will be receiving the information. For example, the need for information on the function of various government offices in the town might be answered by a speaker. The planning committee would select the speaker; the workshop members would receive the information.

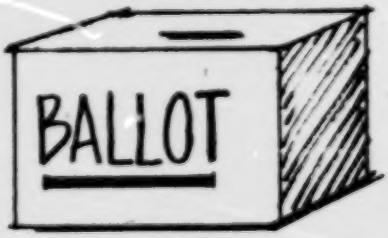
3. Decisions and planning which should be done by the whole workshop. Choosing what projects will be next engaged in would be an example of this sort of decision.

4. Detailed planning by the committee of something the whole membership has decided to do which will then be approved by the membership. Once again, these should be carefully prepared for presentation to the larger group. For instance, the planning committee of the Morgan County Leadership Council had made some plans for a community survey which had been selected at an earlier workshop. These plans needed the approval of the general workshop.

Third: List those tasks in the order of importance. Then choose those which are most important to be done at this meeting. WATCH YOUR TIME. In general, one and one-half hours--certainly not over two hours--is about as long as a meeting should last. The rest of the tasks can be accomplished at later meetings, if they are still considered necessary.

Fourth: Now that you have your list of tasks to be handled at this meeting, decide the best way to handle each task. Some possibilities are:

--Group discussion
--Role playing
--Taking a vote



--Breaking into small "buzz" groups for discussion, and then reporting back to the larger group
--Panel discussion by a number of members who have been gathering information
--One or more speakers who can inform the group
--Question and answer session
--Films and filmstrips

Example: The planning council felt that the best way to get the information needed about the jury commission was to have speakers brought in and then follow the speeches with a question and answer session. They felt a group discussion about possible short-range projects would be most effective in order to get a number of suggestions. This discussion should be followed by a vote to decide which would be chosen. Someone suggested that using small groups for this discussion and then reporting back to the large group would be most useful. Then, the council decided where and when the meeting would be.

Fifth: Check your resources and decide how best to use them in accomplishing your tasks. Some of the resources available to you are:

--Your own knowledge and skills
--Others in your county who have special knowledge and skills
--Public officials
--The library
--The school system
--Organizations in your county
--Films and filmstrips
--A university, college, or junior college near you--particularly the adult or continuing education department

Example: The committee decided the best speakers about the jury commission and the county commission would be members of the commissions themselves. On the matter of the short-range project discussion, they decided one of the planning council members would be in each small group to collect ideas for possible projects.

Sixth: Decide on the order of your activities. Consider the TIME. Try to guess how long each activity might take. Should you drop something? Remember, particularly, that discussion takes a lot of time. Arrange the activities so that a break, if there is to be one, will not disturb the program.

Seventh: Make sure the following physical arrangements have been made:

1. Place and time
2. Chairs and equipment
3. Publicity (letters, phone calls, newspaper and radio announcements, announcements in churches and at other meetings, posters)
4. Transportation for those who need it
5. Refreshments
6. Program sheet

Eighth: Assign responsibilities for all tasks that must be done. Usually, it is best not to put pressure on anyone to help; if someone really isn't willing to help, the chances are he or she won't do a very good job. Do try to make sure the tasks are evenly spread out; that way everyone participates, and no one has too much to do. Also, (1) plan a way to check on progress to make sure all the tasks are being done (perhaps a phone call after a week from the person who will chair the workshop would do it), and (2) set target dates for important tasks.

Ninth: Decide how you will know whether your workshop is a success. Some ways are:

1. Ask your members for their opinions as they leave.
2. Provide a questionnaire at the end of the meeting.
3. Ask a committee to evaluate the meeting.
4. Invite an observer who could report back.

By far the most common method is simply to ask your membership what they think was good and bad about the meeting. Remember, though, that none of these methods are worth doing if the results are not used to improve following meetings.

CHAIRING A LARGE MEETING OR WORKSHOP

The chairman or chairwoman of a meeting has the responsibility for seeing that that meeting runs smoothly. Probably he or she and a committee have planned the meeting together. The person who chairs the meeting makes sure that those plans are carried out. That person also tries to make sure that the meeting is conducted in a fair and democratic manner, with every person given time to express an opinion. He or she tries to see that the activities move on schedule. Sounds like a pretty big job, doesn't it?

That job may seem frightening at first, may seem like something almost impossible for you to do. Often organizations assign the president or vice-president the responsibility of chairing meetings; and, therefore, unless you hold one of these offices, you may never chair a meeting. Perhaps, though, the reason you haven't felt you should hold an office in an organization is because you fear this kind of responsibility, even though you may have other qualifications which would make a leader. In order for the organization to have the benefit of all members' skills, and in order for the individuals within the organization to grow to their fullest, it might be worthwile to consider rotating the task of chairing meetings among the members. Several things might occur from this practice:

1. Several members would be able to practice leadership skills.
2. Several members would be able to practice speaking before a large group of people--a skill that will come in handy when you are trying to make your views known to the community.
3. The organization will have the benefit of a number of different viewpoints directing the meetings.
4. The organization will develop a wide base of leadership, rather than depending solely on one or two individuals.
5. Enthusiasm for an organization and its goals usually grows among members as the participation of the members increases.

If your organization decides to rotate the responsibility of chairing the workshop, if you have just been elected president or vice-president, or if you are attending a meeting and someone is needed to chair it, here are some steps that may make things a little easier.

First: Be familiar with the agenda, or planned activities, for the meeting. Guess how much time will be needed for each, so that you can keep the meeting moving.

Second: Get to the meeting early. Make sure that chairs and equipment are all ready.

Third: Start the meeting on time, if possible. Don't wait too long for latecomers.

Fourth: Call the meeting to order. Welcome everyone and introduce or have someone else introduce anyone new. Tell people what is planned for the meeting.

Fifth: Introduce the first activity, or have someone else do it. WATCH YOUR TIME; don't let the meeting get bogged down in long-winded arguments or discussion to no purpose. Remind those involved that other things need to be done.

Sixth: During a discussion, make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Ask people who haven't volunteered for their opinions; perhaps they have something to say but are a little shy. WATCH YOUR TIME!

Seventh: Continue down your list of planned activities, calling on those people who are responsible for that part. Simply keep things moving.

Eighth: If you'd planned on a break, pick a time between two activities a little more than half way through the meeting. Announce how long the break will be. When the allotted time is over, call the meeting to order and continue.

Ninth: At the end of the meeting, you or someone else should summarize what has happened and list the decisions, if any, that have been made.

Tenth: Close the meeting. Thank people for coming and remind them of when the next meeting will be and how they will be contacted.

CHAIRING A SMALL GROUP OR COMMITTEE MEETING

The responsibilities involved in chairing a small group or committee meeting are very much like those for chairing a large meeting. People usually find it easier to chair a small meeting because the meeting is less formal--generally everyone sits together in a small circle--and there are fewer people to work with. Still, the one chairing the meeting should, just as in a large meeting:

1. Make sure the meeting accomplishes its purpose.
2. Allow everyone a chance to speak and voice an opinion. People should feel free to ask and answer questions. Everyone should help in making the decisions of the group.
3. Keep the discussion on the subject and follow the agenda.
4. Watch the time. Keep the discussion moving, in order to finish what was agreed on.

Here are some steps you may want to use in chairing your meeting:

Before the Meeting

First: Do some planning. Think about what needs to be talked about and what decisions the group needs to make at the meeting. Then put your ideas down as an agenda. These items should generally be a part of any agenda:

1. A quick review of the last meeting and those things people have done since then.
2. Reports on tasks people were to do before the committee meeting (old business).
3. A list of those things the group needs to discuss or decide. Try to put these in a logical order (new business).
4. A list of tasks that must be done before the next meeting.

Second: Decide on a date, time, and place for your committee meeting, perhaps with the help of two or three of those who will serve on the committee. Call or in some way contact your committee members and invite them.

At the Meeting Itself

First: Be early. Check the room to be sure that there are enough chairs and that everyone will be comfortable.

Second: Start the meeting when most of the members have come. Do not wait too long for latecomers. If enough people do not show up (at least half of those expected), cancel the meeting and set a new date.

Third: Call the meeting to order. In a few words welcome everyone and tell the purpose of the meeting. Let people know how long the meeting will last.

Fourth: Appoint someone to keep minutes on what happens at the meeting.

Fifth: Show everyone your agenda. It is helpful to have the agenda listed on a blackboard or flip chart so everyone can see it. Ask if there are any suggestions on things to add. Add only those that the group agrees on.

Sixth: Start the group talking about the first subject on the agenda and keep the group moving until each subject has been taken care of.

Seventh: Divide up the tasks that need to be accomplished before the next meeting. Ask people to volunteer but remember that sometimes people are too shy to speak up. Try to include everyone.

Eighth: Repeat or summarize the decisions that have been made, and close the meeting.

MAKING YOUR PRESENCE FELT IN THE COMMUNITY

Simply by existing, your organization will have some effect on your community. It will, at the very least, focus the concerns of your members on the problems of the community. However, you hope to accomplish much more than that; you hope to inform other people of the concerns of your membership and work toward solutions to the problems you see in your community. To accomplish these things, you and your organization must become visible in the community; other citizens must know you exist and know what you are working for. The city government must know your organization in order to take your comments, criticisms, and goals seriously. Remember: a group of people united in an effort will be considered much more seriously than one or two individuals.

But how do you acquaint your community with your organization? How do you make your presence felt in your community? Below are some suggestions; you may wish to try some or all of them. Also, you will undoubtedly be able to think of others that will be particularly effective in your situation.

1. **Use the media.** Have notices of your coming meetings posted in your local newspaper and announced on radio and television, if your community has local stations. These are called public service announcements, and they are free.

2. Write a report for the paper about each of your large meetings and workshops. If you are planning something special--perhaps a speaker or panel--invite the paper and the radio to send reporters.

3. Tell your members to talk about your organization to their friends, neighbors, and other clubs. Word-of-mouth advertising is powerful.

4. Have some people in your organization go and speak at other meetings about what you hope to accomplish. Ask other groups and clubs to let you speak at their meetings, particularly when you are trying to attract new members or would like other people to participate in a project.

5. Ask to speak on the public forum programs or talk shows of local radio and television stations--particularly if you are beginning a new project and want public support or help.

6. Have your members attend local government meetings, both to learn what is going on and to show that your organization is concerned. It is particularly effective to have the same individual sit in on every meeting of a board or body over a long period of time. These groups will tend to become more responsive to citizens when they know citizens care.

7. If possible, nominate and publically back candidates for political office or appointment who reflect your views. Have your members volunteer to serve on government committees, juries, etc. Encourage your members to run for public office.

8. Speak out in public meetings. Give your opinion, and state what your concerns are.

9. Invite public officials to your meetings, both as speakers, observers, and participants. Question them on the issues.

10. Send members to interview public officials concerning the issues.

11. **Vote** and encourage others to vote.

COMMUNICATIONS, DETAILS, AND PAPER WORK

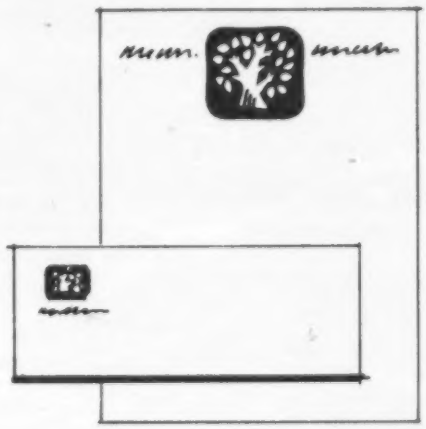
Many organizations are not as effective as they could be because the membership does not pay enough attention to a very simple but extremely important part of any organization--that of communication among members. Making sure everyone knows when the next meeting is, what his or her responsibilities are, how far the projects have gone, and so on takes much time and effort and requires keeping records, too. And, though the work is very important to whatever the organization will accomplish, it is not glamorous work that will receive a lot of attention. Remember: the communication work and record-keeping must be done, and must be done well, in order for the organization to function. Here are some tips that might help:

1. Set up a committee to keep members informed of the place, time, and subject of the next meeting. Committee workers might call or mail notices to the membership about the next meeting.

2. Have your communications committee or some of your members form a mailing and calling list of your membership, as well as a listing of people who might have information you need. The best way to do this is to get a small box and fill it with index cards. Give each member a card to fill out, with his name, last name first, at the top left corner. Include phone numbers, addresses, and any other information that might be helpful--perhaps where the individual works, or a listing of special interests she or he might have. Then, whenever it is time to notify people of a meeting, simply work through the card file, either calling them or sending out notices.

3. Use your local newspaper to announce meetings.

4. Consider, if your organization can afford it, investing in some letterhead stationery. Design a "logo," a small drawing that symbolizes your organization, for the stationery, if possible. Printed letterhead stationery is impressive and is generally seen as the mark of a stable, serious organization. Any letter your group writes, whether an invitation to speak, a letter to the editor, or a complaint to a government official, will be treated more seriously if it is written on "official" letterhead stationery.



5. Work out some method where the organization can check to make sure individuals have fulfilled their responsibilities. Perhaps the chairman or chairwoman of that particular meeting can call to make sure all details are covered; perhaps your organization can think of other checks. It is very important to avoid, if at all possible, the situation which arose at the Morgan County Leadership Council when two members had been asked to invite a speaker. Both thought the other would attend to it; neither did. When the day for the workshop arrived, the chairperson had no speaker, and therefore the whole program was ruined.

6. Work out a system for keeping records about your organization's activities and meetings. You may want to elect a secretary for this purpose, or you may want to alternate the job. In any case, it is important for records to be kept so that later you will know what decisions were made and why. One method of doing this is to have someone take minutes at any committee meeting and turn them in to the secretary to keep in a notebook. At workshops or large meetings, you may wish to have someone take minutes, or you may decide it would be better to have someone write a summary of the activities that occurred to be included in your records with a copy of the agenda.

7. See that someone--perhaps an individual, perhaps a committee--assumes the responsibility for writing articles and notices for the newspaper, radio, and even television if there is a local station.

8. Maintain a scrapbook of articles about your organization that have appeared in the newspaper. This scrapbook will show what progress has been made and also how much attention your organization is getting.

9. Don't forget to make arrangements to borrow the room you plan to have meetings in. Be sure to make arrangements for all equipment you need, too.

10. Remember that while attending to details often isn't much fun, the little jobs **must** be done if your organization is going to work. Otherwise, no one will know when your meetings are, no one will know what happened last time, and no one will know what is planned for the future. Divide the work equally, and make sure that each job--no matter how small it is--gets done.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

When planning a meeting, a workshop, a public gathering, or an attack on a specific community problem, remember to consider all the possible resources available to make your planning as effective as possible. In fact, it is a good idea to start a list of resources as soon as possible and keep adding to it as time goes along. Space is left after each resource suggestion below for you and your group to add specific names and places.

Your Own Knowledge and Skills

Each member has talents and knowledge which should be used. Perhaps there is someone who is good with figures; that person might be a good choice to be treasurer. People who are good at organizing would be good choices for planning councils. Someone who writes well might do the publicity. Don't forget to include members' special knowledge, too. Is there someone who has kept records of elections in your group? Someone who has attended school board meetings? Make a list of your members and their talents and knowledge.

Others in Your Area Who Have Special Knowledge and Skills

These might include the newspaper editor, a local person interested in history, a local politician, the librarian, a school teacher, anyone who has something to contribute to your understanding of community problems. You'll want to keep adding to this list as you dig deeper into your projects.

Public Officials

Remember that your taxes pay public officials' salaries and that your vote helps to put them in office. You have a right to their services and their information. Call them, go see them, invite them to speak to your group when you want specific information. Include not only local officials but the state and national representatives of your area.

1. Local government (mayor, city council, school board, etc.)

2. State government (your state representative, your state senators, the state board of education, or any state agency which might be concerned with your problems)

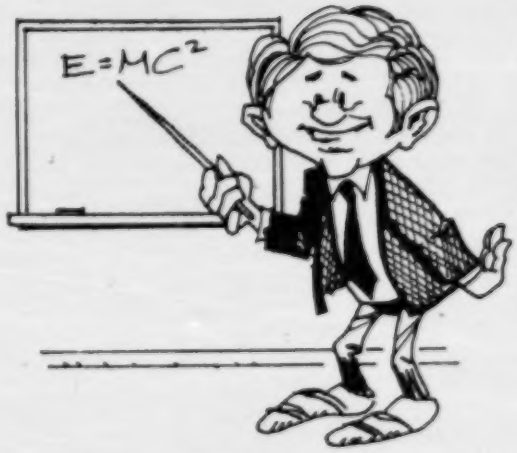
3. National government (your representatives to the U. S. House and Senate, national agencies which might be concerned with your problems)

Libraries

Your local and county libraries, plus any other libraries in the area, will be good sources of information for you. Is there a community college or four-year college nearby? A university? Ask for their help. Libraries often have on their staffs adult educators who are happy to help community groups locate and evaluate information. In addition, there are all sorts of public documents, materials, newspapers, magazines and books that might be helpful at some time. List your libraries.

The School System

Often school systems have specialists who may be useful to you; perhaps someone who teaches American history or local history and government would be helpful at some time. In addition, the school board and the superintendent may be helpful. The school system is also likely to have available films or slides that may be helpful to your group. There may be an adult education section in the public school system itself or attached to a college or university that will provide information. Check out all the possibilities.



Your County Extension Agent

The county agent is a representative of the Cooperative Extension Service, which has had lots of experience with rural community development and is showing interest in urban problems. Your agent can help not only with farming problems but also with problems concerning food, clothing, nutrition, and bringing new business to your community. Find out who and what is available.

Films

Often films which show how to accomplish certain tasks can be borrowed from the school system, the library, or other groups. Centers for continuing education generally have a number of films on community action and community development.

The University, College, or Community College Nearest You

Find out if the school has a community services division and what services it offers. Many schools have special courses for adults; see if yours has a course which applies to what you're working on. The faculty will also be a resource, particularly instructors in sociology and government. Does the school have an adult education department? Here is another resource. .

Other Organizations in Your Area

Find out what other organizations are working on and have worked on in the past. Perhaps you can combine efforts. Some possibilities are:

1. League of Women Voters
2. American Association of University Women
3. Service clubs, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.
4. NAACP
5. Churches

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